

**TESTIMONY OF KIMBERLY BIEHN
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF SB 763**

Dear Chairmen Larson, Guglielmo and Verrengia, and members of the Committee,

My name is Detective Kimberly Biehn, from the Bridgeport, CT Police Department. I write to you in support of Senate Bill 763. I truly believe it will benefit all police officers, and other emergency personnel, that protect, and comfort the people of our state from things most of them will never see or experience in their own lives.

A little bit over 25 years ago, 1991 actually, I took an oath to uphold the laws, and protect the public. I was 22 years old, and grew up in a small town near Bridgeport. I never wanted to do anything else but be a police officer from the time I was a small child. I started my career thinking I was going to change the world, but my career changed me, in some ways good, and others not so good. I worked as a patrol officer for most of my seven years in one of the busiest, toughest neighborhoods in the City.

There were days, I loved every second of it, and there were days that I could not believe what I was seeing, experiencing, and hearing. The calls for service we went too, sometimes taking 20-25 calls a night, shootings, homicide's, covering other officers, domestic violence, the awful car wrecks, and many other types of calls for service. Most of the people we didn't know but we would do whatever we could to save a life. Sadly there were many times that I saw lives end in a horrific way.

There were nights I did not think I could make it to one more call. Then I would come across someone that offered a simple "Thank you Officer," and that is what kept me coming back, and it also made me realize that is why I took this job. I took this job to stand up for those people who could not stand on their own.

I was promoted to Detective in October of 1998, and for the past 19 years I have worked in the crime scene unit. I have been to hundreds of homicides, piecing things together to make an arrest, leading to a conviction, and bring closure to the families. This kind of work takes a toll on you.

In the back of my brain is a box of memories that can open at any time. A sight, a sound, certain smells, colors, certain areas of the city, and many other things can open that box. I am then transported to those crime scenes that were locked in that box, and it seems as if I am reliving it over again. The faces of these victims will be forever etched into my brain.

Some crime scenes are worse than others. People killing their own children are the worst for me, and it does happen. These flashbacks lead to not eating, difficulty sleeping, not sleeping at all because of what I see when I close my eyes, nightmares, drinking too much, being short with your loved ones, and friends, the broken plans because you have to go to work. You try not to let anyone see what it is that is bothering you. At times the pain is unbearable, and I think how do I make these recurring thoughts, and the pain go away. If I were no longer alive would anyone really miss me if I were gone? I do know a very special 15 year old, my

beautiful daughter would miss me the most, well at least most days – as all parents with teenagers would understand.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a real illness, not something to be swept under the carpet, because we are cops, and supposed to be tough, and not let this bother us. We are humans, with feelings.

My point here is that, for so long it has been severely frowned upon by the old time cops, and the “Brass” to ask for help. The stigma that you were “crazy,” kept you from seeking that help. Not to mention if you were forced to stop working, how would your family survive from a monetary standpoint?

Throughout my career, I personally have had police officer friends who have taken their own lives because the pain was just too unbearable. The passing of this bill would be a great way to honor those officers who thought they was no other way. I believe that the passing of this bill would greatly benefit police officers, and the communities we are sworn to protect and serve.

Respectfully submitted, Detective Kimberly A. Biehn